Integration of Hazard Mitigation Planning

When a State views the State Hazard Mitigation Plan, the State Administrative Plan, and the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program as three elements of a whole, the mechanisms are present to design, implement, and fund the statewide vision of damage reduction.

State Hazard Mitigation Plan: The Design Mechanism

The Stafford Act, Section 409, requires each State to conduct an evaluation of existing natural hazards statewide, and the risks that they pose. This evaluation, known as the State Hazard Mitigation Plan, helps to identify beneficial hazard mitigation measures.

States use the hazard mitigation planning process to set short- and long-range mitigation goals and objectives. The plan links ongoing State activities such as implementation of State-FEMA Performance Partnership Agreements and development of disaster-resistant communities. After a disaster declaration, heightened interest and available funding sources create increased opportunities for mitigation.

The State Hazard Mitigation Plan may take any form including a component of a comprehensive State mitigation strategy. The Hazard Mitigation Plan may include a specific list of mitigation measures that the State would like to implement. If kept current, the Hazard Mitigation Plan will capture evolving risks to State populations and resources, prioritize types of mitigation measures, and serve as a ready-made wish list when HMGP or other (State, local, private, Federal, etc.) funds are available.

State Administrative Plan: The Implementation Mechanism

The State Administrative Plan is a procedural guide that details how the State will administer the HMGP. States must have a current Administrative Plan approved by the FEMA Regional Director before receiving HMGP funds.

The Administrative Plan may also take any form including a chapter within a comprehensive State mitigation program strategy.

Hazard Mitigation Grant Program: The Funding Mechanism

The HMGP may provide a State with an amount equal or up to 15 percent of the total disaster grants awarded by FEMA after a major disaster declaration to fund measures identified in the State's Hazard Mitigation Plan. These grants may fund up to 75 percent of eligible mitigation measures. The State or local government provides the remaining 25 percent cost-share from non-Federal sources.

> **TIP: See Section 13 for cost-share details.**

Submission/ Approval of the State Hazard Mitigation Plan

Ideally, States will have their Hazard Mitigation Plans up to date when disaster strikes. If not, the State will forward the Hazard Mitigation Plan or update to FEMA within 180 days of the date of the disaster declaration. With written justification from the State, extensions up to 365 days after the disaster declaration may be granted. Because HMGP funding is linked to the plan, early completion can streamline HMGP delivery.

FEMA's Regional Director will, in writing, acknowledge receipt of the plan, indicate whether the plan is approved, and detail any suggested improvements.

44 CFR 206 Subpart M

Details for this requirement are in 44 CFR 206 Subpart M.

Submission/ Approval Deadlines for the Adminis- trative Plan

The State may forward an administrative plan to the Regional Director at any time prior to a disaster declaration or immediately after and request approval. Because an approved administrative plan is a prerequisite of receiving HMGP funds, it is expeditious for the State to keep the plan updated. Independent of the frequency of disaster declarations, each State should review and update the plan at least annually. Annual updates are an eligible activity under FEMA's annual cooperative agreement with the State.

The State may update the State Administrative Plan after each major disaster declaration. Updates, amendments, or plan revisions should be submitted to the FEMA Regional Director for review. However, if the Regional Director has approved the plan or updates within the previous 12 months, no update is required.

If the State determines that its current plan does not require changes, the State should notify FEMA within 90 days after the disaster declaration.

Using NEMIS

The State Administrative Plan module in the National Emergency Management Information System (NEMIS) stores and provides subsequent access to State Administrative Plans received by FEMA. The system is a tool for administrative plan review. This includes tracking of the approval date of each received plan.

Contents of the State Administra- tive Plan

The Administrative Plan describes how the State will manage the HMGP in the event of a disaster. At a minimum, the plan will:

?? Designate the State agency that will act as grantee;

?? Identify the State Hazard Mitigation Officer;

?? Identify staffing requirements and resources; and

?? Establish procedures to guide certain administrative activities.

The required contents are listed in 44 CFR 206.437.

44 CFR 206.437

The following paragraphs will explain these components in greater detail.

Job Aid 2-1, Checklist for Preparing the State Administrative Plan, appears at the end of this section.

Job Aid 2-1

Designation of the Grantee Agency	Typically, the agency designated to act as grantee manages the State responsibilities for Federal and State disaster assistance and, in many States, is responsible for meeting the hazard mitigation planning requirement. While a single agency may administer the funding, the Governor may establish an interagency team to manage the State mitigation program.
Identification of the State Hazard Mitigation Officer	The State Hazard Mitigation Officer is usually responsible for managing the State's mitigation program, coordinating the mitigation team or council, and planning activities. After a disaster, the State Hazard Mitigation Officer manages the HMGP and serves as FEMA's mitigation liaison. Ongoing responsibilities and HMGP duties may overlap immediately after a disaster. Therefore, the State Hazard Mitigation Officer should ensure that there is adequate staff to address the State's mitigation responsibilities.

Identification of Staffing Requirements and Resources

The State may wish to designate the minimum number of personnel, with type of position, needed for the program; however, the organizational structure of the staff should remain flexible and capable of expansion as necessary. Some key staff positions include:

- Clerical, administrative, and financial management support;

- Assistants and program specialists to assist with grant program activities;

- Program specialists qualified to conduct benefit-cost analyses; and

- Environmental planners.

States often rely on staff from the emergency management agency, other State agencies, or the State Hazard Mitigation Team to augment the efforts of the State Hazard Mitigation Officer.

In large events, States may need to hire temporary or contract staff to administer the HMGP effectively. The plan should outline a procedure for expanding staff resources and utilizing State management costs.

> **TIP: See Section 13 for more information on State management costs.**

States should contact FEMA regional office staff or the Emergency Management Institute to identify scheduled training that will increase management ability. Training opportunities include workshops on benefit-cost analysis, the National Environmental Policy Act, and grants management. To the extent possible, these costs should be reflected in the State's request for management cost funding.

Procedures To Guide Implementation Activities

In the Administrative Plan, the State must establish procedures to guide the following 13 activities:

✍ Identify and notify potential applicants of the availability of the program.

✍ Ensure that potential applicants are provided information on the application process, program eligibility, and key deadlines.

✍ Determine applicant eligibility.

✍ Provide information for environmental and floodplain management reviews in conformance with 44 CFR Parts 9 and 10.

✍ Establish priorities for selection of mitigation projects.

✍ Process requests for advances of funds and reimbursements.

✍ Monitor and evaluate the progress and completion of selected projects.

✍ Review and approve cost overruns.

✍ Process appeals.

✍ Provide technical assistance as required to subgrantees.

✍ Comply with the administrative requirements of 44 CFR Parts 13 and 206.

44 CFR Parts 13, 14, and 206

✍ Comply with audit requirements of 44 CFR Part 14.

✍ Provide quarterly progress reports to the Regional Director on approved projects.

Developing a Statewide Commitment to Hazard Mitigation

While interest in hazard mitigation is keenest just after a natural disaster, States should actively encourage year-round dialog on mitigation issues among interested parties statewide.

Project Impact can be an important part of a local community's and State's mitigation strategy. It is an initiative that helps communities protect themselves from the devastating effects of natural disasters by taking actions that dramatically reduce disruption and loss.

Project Impact operates on a common-sense, damage-reduction approach:

?? Preventive actions must be decided at the local level.

?? Private-sector participation is vital.

?? Long-term efforts and investments in prevention measures are essential.

Working with these local and private-sector partners, States can offer expertise and technical assistance to help build disaster-resistant communities. Strategies include efforts at the national and regional level, as well as working with other Federal agencies and States.

State Hazard Mitigation Team: A Valuable Resource

There are many advantages for States that establish State hazard mitigation teams. Individual members bring their varied backgrounds, specialized expertise, and perspectives together to create interagency, interdisciplinary insight. Mitigation issues often cross agency boundaries and require multi-agency coordination to achieve resolution. The interagency aspect of the team diffuses political pressure on the grantee agency and eases the burden of resources.

Typically, State hazard mitigation teams include, but are not limited to, agencies involved with:

- Emergency management;

- Natural resources;

- Floodplain management;

- Environmental issues and historic and archeological preservation;

- Soil conservation;

- Transportation;

- Planning and zoning;

- Housing and economic development;

- Building regulations;

- Infrastructure regulations or construction;

- Public information; and

- Insurance.

Role of the State Hazard Mitigation Team

Teams meet regularly and more frequently after a disaster. Team activities include:

- Identifying the State's vulnerability to hazards;

- Reviewing existing mitigation plans and prioritizing recommendations;

- Developing or updating hazard mitigation plans required under 44 CFR 206 Subpart M; and

44 CFR 206 Subpart M

- Developing a comprehensive strategy for the development and implementation of a State mitigation program;

- Building public and business/industry support for mitigation initiatives;

- Reviewing, assigning priority, and recommending mitigation actions for implementation, including measures to be funded under the HMGP or other Federal grant programs;

- Seeking funding for implementation of mitigation measures; and

- Preparing periodic status reports for the Governor and State legislature.

The State may also request local governments to appoint a mitigation point of contact to assist with both HMGP and planning activities.

Many States have established interagency review boards or selection teams to assist with reviewing, prioritizing, and recommending projects for HMGP funding. These activities may be conducted by the State hazard mitigation team, or an expanded group that may include representatives from the State team, in addition to regional and local government officials and other public or private sector organizations.

> **TIP: States that do not have a State hazard mitigation team should refer to Chapter 4 of the Post-Disaster Hazard Mitigation Planning Guidance for State and Local Governments (DAP-12) for detailed guidance on the development of State hazard mitigation teams.**

Checklist for Preparing the State Administrative Plan

Job Aid 2-1

This checklist may be useful when preparing your State's HMGP Administrative Plan. Use it to verify that all required plan components are included and complete.

Legal Authorities

Does your State plan:

⚒ ⚒ Include the legal basis in Federal and State law **and also** the Federal and State regulations that implement the laws, including:

    ?? Federal financial regulations?

    ?? Federal insurance requirements?

    ?? State financial regulations?

    ?? Procurement code?

    ?? The Governor's executive orders?

    ?? Stafford Act and other applicable Federal laws?

⚒ ⚒ Indicate that the State has the level of knowledge of the laws, regulations, and executive orders so that the State is able to develop methods and procedures to meet legal and audit requirements?

Definitions

Does your State plan:

⚒ ⚒ Define words, phrases, abbreviations, and acronyms relevant to HMGP program management (including program and financial definitions)?

⚒ ⚒ Define or explain unique and/or unfamiliar words and phrases so that the plan user can have a complete understanding of the section containing those words and/or phrases?

Checklist for Preparing the State Administrative Plan *(Continued)*

Job Aid 2-1

Responsibilities

Does your State plan:

⚒ ⚒ Detail the organization framework for HMGP program management?

⚒ ⚒ Clearly delineate who is responsible for each phase of program management?

⚒ ⚒ Explain the relationships between and among major management elements, including the:

⁇ Governor's Authorized Representative?

⁇ State Hazard Mitigation Officer?

⁇ State hazard mitigation team or council?

⚒ ⚒ Include how each major element becomes a part of the management team?

⚒ ⚒ Identify the grantee organization and SHMO?

⚒ ⚒ Include the staffing pattern that will be used at the Disaster Field Office?

Project Identification

Does your State plan:

⚒ ⚒ Describe the methods by which projects will be identified?

Applicant Information

Does your State Plan:

⚒ ⚒ Include application notification procedures that ensure due process to all applicants?

⚒ ⚒ Provide for timely notification of applicants?

⚒ ⚒ Specify the methods for providing technical assistance to applicants?

⚒ ⚒ Include procedures to maintain the timely flow of the application and supplemental information between the State and the applicant?

⚒ ⚒ Include required contents of a preapplication and procedures for submittal to the State Hazard Mitigation Officer?

⚒ ⚒ Specify the due date of the application?

Job Aid 2-1

Checklist for Preparing the State Administrative Plan *(Continued)*

Job Aid 2-1

Review, Ranking, and Selection of Projects

Does your State plan provide details about:

☨ ☨ Who will review, select, and rank the projects?

☨ ☨ The selection criteria? (**Note:** See 44 CFR 206.434 and 206.435.)

☨ ☨ The criteria for ranking the projects that are forwarded to FEMA?

☨ ☨ The schedule for project submission to FEMA and how exceptions will be handled?

Eligibility Requirements for Applicants and Projects

Does your State plan:

☨ ☨ Provide a detailed listing of eligibility requirements to ensure due process by making it clear who can apply and projects that can be considered?

☨ ☨ List or cite the Federal eligibility criteria?

☨ ☨ Explain additional eligibility criteria established by the State (if applicable)?

☨ ☨ Identify resources and procedures for conducting environmental reviews?

☨ ☨ Identify resources and procedures for conducting benefit-cost analyses?

Appeals

Does your State plan address:

☨ ☨ The types of appeals that can be made?

☨ ☨ Elements common to all appeals, including:

   ?? Who may appeal the decision?

   ?? The appeal format?

   ?? The time schedule for an appeal?

   ?? The actual appeal process?

Job Aid 2-1

Checklist for Preparing the State Administrative Plan *(Continued)*

Job Aid 2-1

Funding and Grants Management

Does your State plan include explanations of:

☩ ☩ The cost-sharing formula (i.e., Federal, State, local, or other)?

☩ ☩ Source and calculations used to determine the State and local shares?

☩ ☩ When work should start on an approved project, when work should be completed, and acceptable extensions to the target completion date?

☩ ☩ Procedures that the State will follow if progress toward completion of an approved project is inadequate?

☩ ☩ Procedures to follow to change the scope of work on a project?

☩ ☩ Records maintenance and retention procedures for both the State and subgrantees?

☩ ☩ Is your State plan detailed enough to ensure continuity and provide an audit trail?

Does your State plan include:

☩ ☩ Procedures for the advance or reimbursement of funds to subgrantees, including the amount of advances and the flow of forms and funds?

☩ ☩ Procedures for handling cost overruns, including the approval process, required documentation, and the flow of forms and funds?

☩ ☩ Procedures for handling cost underruns, including the required documentation and the flow of forms and funds?

☩ ☩ Documentation procedures that subgrantees must use?

☩ ☩ Procedures for monitoring progress, including site visits?

Job Aid 2-1

Checklist for Preparing the State Administrative Plan *(Continued)*

Job Aid 2-1

Data Management System

Does your State plan include information about how you will handle:

☩ ☩ Individual project files?

☩ ☩ The declaration master file?

☩ ☩ Reports, including:

    ?? HMGP funding balance reports?

    ?? Quarterly progress reports to FEMA?

    ?? Quarterly financial reports to FEMA?

    ?? HMGP status reports?

    ?? Project/application tracking reports?

Audit Requirements

Does your State plan:

☩ ☩ References 44 CFR Part 14 and OMB Circular A-133?

☩ ☩ Describe the coordination between the State Hazard Mitigation Officer and the Governor's Authorized Representative to ensure that audits are performed and reviewed?

☩ ☩ Include review procedures for audits and the actions to take if there are exceptions or adverse findings?

☩ ☩ Procedures for the State Hazard Mitigation Officer to request an audit of any project from the Governor's Authorized Representative?

Job Aid 2-1

Checklist for Preparing the State Administrative Plan *(Continued)*

Job Aid 2-1

Closeout Procedures

Does your State plan include project closeout procedures, including copies of the:

✝ ✝ Letter confirming final inspection and payment to the applicant?

✝ ✝ Letter to the FEMA Regional Director from the Governor's Authorized Representative requesting that FEMA close the project? Note: This letter must include the following information and/or enclosures:

   ?? The project name, Federal project number, and State identification number.

   ?? A financial summary of the project.

   ?? Certifications

       ✝✝ Of all eligible funds paid to the subgrantee;

       ✝✝ That all work was completed according to FEMA requirements;

       ✝✝ That all costs were incurred as the result of eligible work.

       ✝✝ That all work was completed in accordance with provisions of the FEMA-State and State-local agreements.

       ✝✝ That all payments were made according to Federal and State legal and regulatory requirements.

       ✝✝ That no bills are outstanding.

       ✝✝ That no further requests for funding will be made for the project.

Does your State plan include program closeout procedures, including:

✝ ✝ Documentation that all projects are closed?

✝ ✝ The requirements that records be retained for a period of 3 years from the date that the request for program closeout is submitted to FEMA?

Plan Review

Does your State plan:

✝ ✝ Explain when and why the plan will be reviewed and revised?

✝ ✝ Provide for FEMA review of the plan (or for notification that the State's review did not result in revisions)?

Job Aid 2-1

Job Aid 2-1

Checklist for Preparing the State Administrative Plan *(Continued)*

Appendices

Does your plan include any appendices that are necessary to assist in program administration? Sample appendices could include copies of:

❏ ❏ The executive order and letter appointing the State hazard mitigation team or council.

❏ ❏ Sample press releases.

❏ ❏ A sample agenda for the HMGP briefing at the Disaster Field Office or in the field.

❏ ❏ The State's application form.

❏ ❏ The State-Local Disaster Assistance Agreement/Certification.

❏ ❏ The quarterly progress and financial report formats.

❏ ❏ The names of State hazard mitigation team or council members with addresses and phone/fax numbers.

❏ ❏ Items to take to the Disaster Field Office.

❏ ❏ Items to include in the project and disaster files.

❏ ❏ A sample letter of the State's participation in the HMGP.

❏ ❏ A copy of the subgrantee procedures for grant administration.

❏ ❏ State-specific procedures or requirements for specific project types.

❏ ❏ Sample closeout letters.